

Social Service PILOT and Comparative Impact Study Committee

Ablondi Room 7:30 PM Memorial Building Framingham, Ma

Minutes

January 19, 2006

Attendance: Bob Berman , Yaakov Cohn, Dawn Harkness, Cynthia Laurora., Laurie Lee, Jim Palmer, Wes Ritchie, Nick Sanchez, Steve Orr , John Speranza

Guests: Jerry Desilets from SMOC, Jeanne Ryan from Wayside Chris Gordon and Diane Gould from Advocates

Meeting called to order by Chair Berman at 7:30 PM.

Representatives from Advocates, Wayside and SMOC were welcomed to the meeting.

Bob opened the discussion with a summary of the committee's effort and a review of the issues regarding the survey sent out to all the social service agencies in Framingham. He asked to hear from the agencies, **to** present their thoughts and concerns regarding this. The committee is also open to discussing other ways to frame the questions that will provide us with information but prove acceptable to the agencies.

Jerry Desilets from SMOC began by thanking the committee, on behalf of all the agencies, for the opportunity to have face time. He thought there were important and legitimate questions raised at town meeting His understanding of town meeting's charter was to determine the impact on the tax base of social service delivery system in Framingham. He spoke about issues regarding identifying program locations and the publication of addresses. He was concerned about unwarranted attention focused on specific sites. He referred to a derogatory email focused on a particular property. While this email and author had no connection with the PILOT committee it was very disturbing and raised some questions.

He continued that there certainly are ways to get all the addresses, for example through the assessor's office, which is public information.

He said that SMOC owns 44 buildings in Framingham and pays taxes on some of them. He would like to know what the committee really needs to know about the properties.

Mr. Desilets brought a listing of 42 programs SMOC runs in Framingham. Of these, 12 are residential. The other **are** mostly administrative or entitlement programs that have no impact on the property base of the town. An analysis of each of these programs would be time consuming for the agency and the committee. They could easily produce a 20 page analysis of each one of 30 programs that have no property tax impact. He added that SMOC is an umbrella organization and this list is not totally exhaustive of all the programs but is a good representation.

Some of the buildings used pay property taxes and some don't. It would help to have clarification from the committee if information on the taxed properties is necessary since they don't have any impact one way or another on the taxpayers. He was concerned about unwarranted intrusion.

He is happy to provide information but would not like to see a particular program linked with an address.

Mr. Desilets spoke to the issue of who SMOC serves in Framingham. He said in regard to any State contract; EOHHS, DMH, DMR, DPH, DOC... SMOC does not select the clients for those programs. They are selected by the State and the State Agencies. They determine who will go to the State funded programs. Some would be from Framingham, some wouldn't. He said that in all honesty he doesn't think the State even considers that when placing people. If it is a housing program or sober living program, that is not a State contract, SMOC would screen the people.

Diane Gould from Advocates was also happy to be here. **Bill** Taylor sent his regrets for not making it. They have been **part** of Framingham for 30 years. They are looking forward to the conversation.

Chris Gordon from Advocates agreed. He said he also wanted to look at the other side of the coin, which is difficult to do, especially after such a warm welcome from Laurie and the committee. He wanted to say that they are approaching the conversation with some degree of trepidation. It doesn't arise from what the committee is about or the committee's integrity, which is trying to make the best Framingham; he continued that we are worried that the process of this inquiry might be unintentionally discriminatory to the people we serve; disadvantaged and disabled. To focus on the cost of inclusion of their clients might violate the spirit of the ADA act. Congress addressed the issue of cost and acknowledged that the cost is expensive but the people of the country were enjoined to take on that cost.

Jeanne Ryan from Wayside is delighted to be here. She has already been working with the committee and has shared information; she would like to know what exactly we need to know would be helpful. All the agencies differ in size and client base. She wants to know more because they have limited resources. And the amount of time for these questions to be answered is her concern. She was wondering if there is a way to get to what we need without such detail and volume.

John Speranza was wondering why they objected **and** are averse to allowing information to be known about the addresses: having the people of Framingham know what we have in town and all the details seems fair.

Jerry Desilets said that an email referring to a particular house and calling the residents losers was an offense and violation of the people in the home. They did not want to participate in that happening at other locations. It was offensive and might have violated the civil rights of the people on the home. They will give numbers and tax information: but not specifics regarding the addresses and what is at that address. He will describe the number of properties owned and the tax status. He will provide separate, generic information about programs. He also doesn't see any use or purpose to provide information about specific programs being run at specific locations or the type of people being served.

Diane Gould added that the people they support are people with disabilities. They are trying to better their lives, like all of us. Knowing who they are and what goes on in their homes **is** not relevant.

Jerry added that all of us work hard to be good neighbors in the places we are. SMOC properties are usually the nicest properties and they blend into the environment... Most people don't point out the type of property or the owner. They are part of the

neighborhood and the neighbors interact with them. If there are public safety issues, specifically regarding the police, they want to know about that and will respond to it.

It is critical for them to have good neighbor policies. Two years ago when a place opened the abutters came to a meeting and he gave his number. He has had only one call and it was positive. In other places, if there is a problem, they respond to it immediately. They have all adopted good neighbor policies.

Bob asked about the siting criteria that the agencies use. What is used to determine where you site your programs and facilities? Can you answer that question? This has been an important topic for the committee.

Mr. Gordon asked why the committee is interested in that.

Steve Orr said that one of the reasons we are here is because of the disproportionate concentration of SSA's in Framingham. Why Framingham: why an expansion n Framingham. This is important.

Dawn added that he is making an assumption based on a lack of information. We do not know if we have a disproportionate number of anything. We haven't studied the concentration in other communities yet.

Steve said that they could also choose to explain why Framingham has a low number of SSA's and sites in Framingham.

Mr. Desilets thought the siting question is a reasonable question. Why Framingham, Marlboro, Milford, Hudson. It depends on the State contracts. They may say operate a family program that can service 15 families. We need to do as the contract says. If an agency is looking at possible sites for that (40 people) what type of property will we look at: a small hotel in a downtown area? a big old rooming house; a former long term care facility. When state regulations changed, nursing homes closed and have become other programs. So a lot of siting is determined by the scope of service and the number of people who will be served.

Other siting issues are determined by financial considerations. Will it fit the contract requirements? We couldn't afford a 12 room house in Sherborn or Sudbury if we could even find it. The properties available there wouldn't fit in to the contract. You would be unable to run it. Framingham is demographically affordable in terms of housing and population. It is a likely candidate for the social service programs because of this. It falls into that category with Waltham, Milford, Hudson, Marlboro Worcester,...parts of Boston. No one selects downtown Framingham or Milford to absolutely locate there. Transportation is important, but not number one.

Diane Gould seconded about the funding. DMH and DMR fund them. She added that they are funded to site things regionally. Advocates is one of 1100 SSA provides. They are based and founded in Framingham. They do provide more services in Framingham than other communities... They also include where the individuals want to live: where their ties might be. They also consider affordable housing, job opportunities and access to other community resources. They look for quiet neighborhoods with low crime rates. The clients become part of the fabric of the community.

Jeanne did not see evidence that Metrowest was out of sync with the rest of the State. She will get information to us regarding that. She has resources which talk about service providers around the State.

Yaakov thought they were raising concerns about the confidentiality of addresses. The committee is sensitive to that.

Mr. Desilets said they are aware and grateful for that. They know the committee has taken that stand and appreciate it. They were not linking the committee with what has happened regarding the email. He commented that they are also aware that once information is given to the committee **it** is public information. That gives them pause. They are not accusing the committee of not being aware of and sensitive to this issue. We appreciate it.

Yaakov was very concerned with the statement that what we are doing can be considered discriminatory. He thinks that what we are doing is a legitimate public policy inquiry. It's giving the wrong cast on the effort.

Nick (through Cynthia) do any of you have problems answering question 11 in the Program section or any of the questions 1- 11 on page 2

11. Has the program been evaluated by the State? Please provide sources available

Wayside said they have specific licenses from the state and they follow those guidelines.

Mr. Desilets said that for State contracts they are audited on many levels: program and fiscal. There are program reviews to be sure we are meeting the goals and fiscal that we are within the fiscal guidelines.

Cynthia: Is it possible to provide the actual records of those audits. Is this public information. Is it annual?

Mr. Desilets said yes but he didn't know where they might be. Perhaps from the State agencies. He would think about how to find it. Most are annual audits. The SSA's should have them too.

Diane agreed that the State agencies would have them.

Jeanne said we might want to focus in on certain areas. There is a lot of information.

Diane added that there are several review processes besides an annual audit that are less formal. Evaluations that are done by human rights organizations and other groups.

Jeanne added that Wayside goes through the Council on Accreditation

The information is certainly available.

John asked if the agencies pre-empt the SSA needs based on what the state deems are their needs?

He elaborated: If you think there is need in a community for a certain amount of money (\$1 million) will the State give you the money based on your determination of need.

Jerry explained that the State puts out a contract for a certain amount of money for a certain type of program in a certain area and it gets bid on. For example, they have \$390,000 and will put it up for bid. It's a 3 year contract for a residential program in

Metrowest.

Diane said they also get money from the FEDs for housing renovation. They submit a grant, with a budget, for that renovation money to HUD.

Bob asked about the payroll and spending section. He said we are looking at not only the costs of the programs, but the benefits. This might be one of the benefits.

3. How many employees are Framingham residents?

Jerry said they could get that info: they have about 520 employees, with 150 in Framingham. SMOC can get that exact information, with the payroll information.

Jeanne and Chris agreed they can also get information on contributions to the economy such as vendor purchases.

Jeanne said there is vendor spending too that they can get: she doesn't live here it but spends a lot of money here.

Diane said they tried to look at that. She said (inaudible, but possibly that the agencies employ 426 people in Framingham and spends \$13 million on those, wages in Framingham. Many of the employees here live here.)

She added that they are very appreciative that we are looking at the positive benefits. That question was refreshing: some of the questions were focused on the burdens on the community, but there is great benefits too. This question underlines that.

Jeanne said that for Wayside some of the general agency questions there are a few challenges.

She thought that questions 3 and 4 **showed** real balance. It might be hard to get at but the question shows the flow. The referring agencies would know that.

Nick asked in relation to benefits: Jerry, what is your budget for activities in Framingham? In absolute or relative terms.

Could that be answered?

Jerry said it might be hard to answer.

For example: they own 100 buildings. Certain costs and overhead would be difficult to allocate to just Framingham. Actual costs might be hard but expenditure might be possible. The annual budget is \$52 million. How much is in Framingham would be hard to determine. They might be able to get a gross estimate. If they can get Framingham expenditure they will provide it.

Jerry said they could give an estimate but it would not necessarily be science.

Cynthia asked if any of the funding agencies have any concerns about the questionnaire. Has there been any dialogue about answering these questions. Have the agencies expressed an opinion?

They have not brought it to their attention or had any discussion with them.

Dawn said that by watching planning board meetings she learned that sometimes an organization creates a report on global contribution and benefits to the town. Do you have anything like that? Is that data already collected?

Jerry said that besides the payroll, the numbers of dollars spent here, we have some of that information, and we could try.

Dawn said that her question was more global: she thinks that some of the contributions/benefits from the agencies to the town of Framingham might be converted to a dollar value. The idea that you don't have to travel to Boston to get counseling or services. The fact that we have the services here to benefit Framingham: that the 67,000 people of Framingham have access to these services. We have our own % of substance abuse problems.

Jerry said that state wide agencies, such as Mental Health and Substance Abuse Corporations, has some statistics : for each dollar you spend on substance abuse problems you save \$7 in terms of lost wages, lost employment, family dissolution, unemployment, people losing housing These are State wide numbers. Jerry didn't know if they could be applied to Framingham

He heard what she is getting out and will look into it. There is a group looking at these kinds of questions.

Diane said in regard to the previous question, there was a letter from Representative Blumer to EOHHS about the advisability of sharing addresses. The EOHHS position is to provide the number and type of addresses but not specifics. They thought it was a violation of privacy rights.

Mr. Desilets said that they have had meetings with BOS task force (Giombetti and Sisisky) looking at downtown issues. The MSA Disability Law Center attended a meeting and stated to them, unequivocally, that not withstanding what we may or may not want to do, even an agency that discloses the address or type of program can be sued by its own clients. We all took notice of that. We had to think about that information. We know the committee is aware of our concerns and how serious they are.

Bob asked if Jerry could identify where clients were living before entering into the programs they are now in. We are trying to identify the number or % of Framingham residents directly involved in these programs.

Mr. Desilets said that Diane touched on that before when discussing the ties to the area. The residential programs funded by the DMH or DMR system is regionally based. The people from these programs might be more likely to come from the region, but not specifically Framingham. With other State contracts, the families selected for the programs are selected by the agencies; primarily the Department of Transitional Assistance. We do not know where the families are from until after placement. Then one can never be certain that where they have listed they are from is accurate because of the transitory nature of the placement. In contracted programs it is the agency selecting the clients to participate, not SMOC. DMR and DMH is more regionally based but the others are State wide .This is how people get admitted to the various programs.

Jeanne Ryan asked if we are only focusing on residential or all programs offered.

Bob said we considering both.

Jeanne said that in Framingham, Wayside has a number of group homes, counseling center, family and community outreach .Residential placement is based on the grant. The others are concentrated in working with Families in the community and highly focused on Framingham. She will try to get the exact numbers.

Laurie **asked if there** is there any collaboration with the government of Framingham in identifying the needs of the community. In her research she found several other towns had active participation in determination of community needs.

Chris Gordon from Advocates spoke about the Jail Diversion Program. It grew out of a partnership between Framingham Police and Advocates. Advocates provided advice for the SWAT team and it grew to a program being run with regular police. The collaboration led to a presence of Advocates in the police building and it has had tremendous results.

Jerry Desilets said SMOC is working with the FPD on the question of Downtown substance abuse issues that are obviously a problem for the community, the police department and SMOC. They are trying to develop appropriate programs and quick response to some difficult issues downtown. He added that SMOC has had routinely historically good working relationships with the police department and other areas of town. There has never been a formal working relationship with the policy making folks or TMM, but over the course of time SMOC has had good working relationships with people throughout town and government and school.

Laurie asked if in any of the other communities they serve, is there any close relationship with the government (planning board, planning department...) maybe not specifically in siting and running of the programs, but strong collaboration.

Jeanne Ryan said that Wayside does have a street outreach program. It was developed because of some problems in the community. The community neighbors came together and recognized the need, and we developed the program.

Jeanne added that there is a distinction between the needs of a community and the needs of the funding sources. That is what we are getting at.

State and Federal funding is the driving force.

She added that the needs of the community can be addresses through grassroots campaigns as demonstrated by the outreach program.

Diane said Advocates has not had formal collaboration but has support of the government for their rehab projects. They have also received CDBG funding. It would be interesting to see how other agencies and communities have dealt with the issue.

Mt. Desilets sad that the City of Worcester has established a Human Services Working Group. The Mayor sits on it with counselors, legislators, reps and SSA ceo's. Right now they are working on developing a plan to address the issue of homelessness in Worcester.

They are identifying needs together. The community is coming together to tackle issues. That is a good model for Framingham or any place. All of the people who have a stake in the outcome are participants in the discussion.

Jeanne said that the steering committee of the Framingham Community Partners discusses community issues. She just joined that organization. They have open exchange and dialogue.

Cynthia followed up on the address issue. She wanted to point out that most of the question in the survey are not about addresses. She said that she personally isn't that concerned about receiving specific addresses. Most of their charge is to look at the overall impact. We need to know the magnitude to see if there is an impact.

Jerry said that knowing the number of buildings we own is important. They have 44. The details of that information is on the record somewhere: in the assessor's office. He thinks it is reasonable for the committee to ask which properties of those 44 pay taxes and which don't. And then to determine the tax revenue for the non taxed properties. Then the follow up, perhaps there are some benefits that accrue to the community because of these programs. He thinks the committee needs that information and he doesn't have a problem with that.

Cynthia followed up; it is not just property tax dollars. It can be other things.

Jerry said that one could look at the number of children in the Framingham school system. We can give you that number and you can determine if there is an impact. How much is that.

Jeanne said that is an interesting dialogue. Wayside takes pains to take the children back to their original community to go to school. She thinks the committee will be pleased to hear the information.

Bob summed up that those questions are answerable.

The group said yes.

Cynthia followed up on the issue of town departments.

She noticed that Southborough has a sizable town department with social workers available to the community.

Jerry Desilets said that when Framingham had a Human Service Relations staff person there was a more formal and involved relationship/communication with the agencies and the town. That person was always in touch with the agencies. They could share information and work together.

Those were productive relationships. That position was eliminated during the budget crunch. For that dialogue between the social service agencies and the town, that decision was a disaster and is still playing out.

One thing he hopes the committee is considering recommending is that position is re-instated.

Laurie wanted to point out a potential confusion regarding the addresses. She is not disregarding the issue of their concern with identifying addresses.

Laurie pointed out that the committee did not want any information about specific addresses, such as programs. That is why they separated the sections for addresses and programs. There was never an intention of linking those.

Jeanne Ryan pointed out that she thought it was very useful that the list of properties that the committee knew about were listed on the website; especially the taxed and non taxed separation. That afforded her the opportunity to correct some errors. And it was appreciated. And she is sure that we have found many taxable properties.

Jim Palmer wondered if there is any way that we, the SSA and town, could come up with what it would cost the town of Framingham to provide the same services if the agencies did not exist. In other words, what would it cost the town to provide services to their residents? This would not include the out of town clients. If we had to hire a psychologist, social worker, what would it cost? This might be a benefit to the town to offset lost tax revenue.

Jerry Desilets said that is a hard question to get at. It comes back to the issue: Can we identify who is a Framingham person in our program.

That might be nearly impossible to determine. Most of SMOC's Wheels on Deals, Head Start and food pantry programs are Framingham people. None of those services are provided from non taxed buildings so there is not a tax issue. The services are mostly provided to low income Framingham residents

Mr. Desilets continued that 40% of the Wheels folks are from Framingham.

The fuel assistance program...

He also raised the issue of what is SMOC's service area.

For the 42 programs, they have 42 different areas they serve.

Some have 9 towns, some 23, some statewide.... A clear answer is difficult. Some programs are heavily weighted to Framingham such as the Meals program.

Jim also asked the following question: He has taken part in grant proposal He was allowed to put in all expenses. Would the agencies support legislation to support changes to the grants such that those community expenses could be included and come ask to the communities.

Jerry thought it was a great recommendation. Worcester is about to recommend just that.

He recommends doing it on the cherry sheet. A reimbursement to a town like Framingham that has taken on the responsibility of providing social services. That needs to be recognized on the cherry sheet.

Diane said that it is better to not link such things to State contracts because often the contracts are cut.

They agreed that the mechanics of it going into the contract is difficult but the cherry sheet would work.

Chris Gordon said that Advocates would strongly endorse that kind of acknowledgement: that a regional Hub like Framingham, may be holding a disproportionate number of services, although he doesn't know if that is true.

Mr. Desilets said that there used to be State reimbursement for State property. That is the model he is thinking about.

Laure said she knows about programs where the State does pay some monies. She said that since the State de-institutionalized services, they are very happy not to have to pay the towns anything; she agree that it should be on the Cherry Sheet... The latest report that the Governor will increase aid to the growing Cities and towns does not include communities like Framingham, which are taking on the burdens of the State and not being reimbursed

Jerry said that if you look at the communities that as he likes to describe it, are accepting and sharing the responsibilities to provide services for those in need, Marlboro, Milford, Worcester, Springfield.. They are providing a good portion of the social services for the State. You can consider that you have a strong coalition of legislators from those communities: something real could happen with that. A coalition and elbow grease, one could get things done. This is a fruitful discussion to have. A coalition of the Agencies and the towns would also be helpful.

Nick, through Cynthia, wondered if a ballpark figure of the number of clients served in Framingham could be provided.

Jerry Desilets asked if he meant residential or all programs.

He said all.

Jerry that it might not be science but it would be a very good number.

Is it something g you could provide right away?

Chris Gordon said it is easy to provide that number.

Jerry said that in Framingham it is about 8,000- 10,000 including all programs.

Cynthia wondered what % of all programs is wheels on Deals. In relation top other programs. How big a piece of pie are these programs?

Jerry said Head Start and WIC are big. WIC serves 20+ towns Head Start serves 10 towns and has 418 children.

Cynthia asked if they could give some estimates for that.

Jeanne asked about the program specific questions and about giving information about non Framingham residents using them in Framingham and about Framingham residents going to another town to use services there.

The committee said they did want to know that and asked it, but perhaps not so clearly.

Dawn said she knows of programs where a resident cannot stay in their home town... For example a battered woman from Framingham cannot stay in the place you are from and need to go to another community.

Jerry said that certainly situation involving violence means a person has to get away fro their old community. Similar for the substance abuse situation. It is important to get away from your old contacts. SO that is why the residential programs are difficult to determine residency.

Remember that in State contracts, it is the State that selects clients for these programs. It is out of our control.

Mr. Gordon said that Advocates serves 196 people in residential programs in Framingham and 8,000 for emergency services. The larger number is more regional.

Jeanne said that Wayside serves (inaudible)...

Were we interested in residential programs and outreach number?

The committee said yes.

Laurie commented that the question Jeanne had mentioned was included in the survey in another place and we can clarify it.

Discussion of how to clarify this issue ensued.

Diane was not certain how Advocates could determine those numbers.

They could not know how many people are from around the State in Framingham and visa versa.

Bob said the group is looking to determine how many people from Framingham are in your outside programs and how many people from outside are in the Framingham programs.

They all agreed that if the question can't be answered that is ok.

The next discussion was on how one determines what it means to be from Framingham. The committee said this has been a difficult question. They all had a different definition.

Cynthia asked to address this: she thought that there is a question in the community: "Are people coming to Framingham just for the services that are not provided elsewhere. Are we identified as a regional hub?"

Jerry thought it would be helpful for people to know how many people actually live in residential programs in Framingham. The actual number. Facts will be helpful.

He thought that Framingham is a regional Hub for social services, and has been from before he was born. It is a working class community.

The other towns like Sudbury, Hopkinton, Southborough, and Sherborn... are not. They don't have the housing stock. Others like Marlboro, Milford, and Worcester...do. Marlboro has residential programs. Milford has them. But Holliston Sudbury, Dover, Southborough does not. One reason is there are no factories. There are many reasons for it.

He is aware that there are perceptions that Framingham is the Hub for everything. He does not think that is the case.

Mr. Desilets said that he thinks that getting at the real numbers will help. It will be educational for all of us.

Jeanne said that to get at the reason for why they come to Framingham.... social services might be a factor. But there are other benefits that Framingham brings: .housing, jobs, there is an entire package.

Bob said that to get back to a definition of Framingham resident, we have to define that.

Jerry thought that was a tough one to get at

He thought that an interesting number would be how many people actually are in the residential programs in Framingham. The other number, how many people they serve that actually are from Framingham, is a tougher number

Jerry said that defining who came here first and then needed the services, as compared to who came here for the services is hard. He still thinks the interesting number will be how many people are in the residential programs.

Jerry suggested that the numbers we do get might be compared to other communities demographically similar to Framingham.

Steve thought there was a distinction between people who have been in town for a year or 2 or more and people who just don't live in Framingham, but come here for the services. That should be easily definable.

Jerry said that looking at the number of people in residential programs would be educational. He emphasized again that the people in those programs did not choose to come here. They are placed there. The State picks them and sends them here. We do not pick them.

Steve asked about the capacity of the agencies...

Jerry said... what is the capacity? Some think it is thousands, but he thinks it is much less than that

Cynthia asked a question for Nick: Would it be possible to isolate one year, perhaps 1995, and see what was going on then to determine the growth in Framingham since then.

Diane clarified: to determine how many people and homes we had?

Jerry said it was a good question but he suspects he doesn't have records for that type of information

He thinks they go back 7 years like the IRS.

Chris Gordon thought they could approximate how many people they were serving.

That would give an idea of growth.

Bob summarized that it would be difficult to determine programs...

Cynthia asked for Nick if you could determine 5 years back.

They will look and see what they can do.

The committee is looking for a comparative.

Bob said we will try to define the terms and the questions better.

Laurie asked if they had any way to track their properties back to 1990.

Do you know what you owned in 1990?

Jerry thought they could do that.

Diane said that if Advocates talks about how many properties and people they had 5 years ago; they had significant growth due to a merger.

The committee said they could mark that information down.

John asked if they know the length of time the clients are with them

And repeat clients too.

Chris said that is a difficult question. People sometimes start with one type of service and move through other areas of service for many years. Even 20.

He added that the intensity of engagement changes over time.

John asked who controls transfers.

Jerry said that in State contracted programs the duration is in the contract. It might not be absolute but there are guidelines. For example recovery programs might be 6 months. It varies depending on the nature of the service.

Jeanne said that the nature of the program can change over time, as the population changes.

Jim commented that he respects the agencies and the rights of privacy but asked who does the PR? There have been tremendous slams at the organizations. They should be speaking about the accomplishments. The youth programs, peer tutoring, teenage pregnancy... we have no data on these. Someone in PR should tell the community. They need a good PR campaign.

Jerry said it was a good point. He brought a good story from the MWDN during Christmas. It is a picture of 4 programs operating in Framingham. They also had a guest column from 3 Framingham folks on the Board of Directors.

SMOC needs to do more of this type of dialogue. We, in the SSA world, also need to realize there are legitimate questions about what we do.

People who need to understand the impacts should be able to ask those questions. This could happen just like this; get groups of people together for these types of conversations. We might not agree on the same strategies but it is important to do this.

Telling success stories through the local media, and giving the MWDN credit for doing this. These are stories that need to be told.

We should celebrate the success as well as coming to grips with the knotty problems.

He thought that the best public relations strategy is to continue dialogues like this one. This has been very helpful for them to know the committee.

Jeanne also hopes to continue the dialogue going forward. Especially as the information comes to the committee. There may be questions that need to be clarified.

Bob said that on behalf of the committee we thank our guests for joining us. This is an important step towards our final report. This is long over due. Thank you for coming.

Motion to Adjourn

Vote: 9 in favor 0 opposed 0 abstain

Laurie Lee

Clerk